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Can Twitter Help Your Teaching?

NEA-National Education Association <http://www.nea.org/home/32641.htm>

There are more than three million users on Twitter. A constant web of new information and opinions is constantly being thread, being told by only 140 character increments. The main stance that the National Education Association, or NEA, takes on the twitter situation is that of experimenting. The article stresses trying Twitter out to see if it works with an individual’s classroom.

One important piece of advice for the new teacher is to use Twitter to reach out to other educators. Twitter can be a stepping stool for communication and networking in an already established educational world. A new teacher can pose a question for elder educators and have a response almost immediately. The NEA warns, however, that a teacher should also contact their district to see if there are any policies that would prevent them from using Twitter as a tool for their classroom.

Twitter can also be used to help guide the students in the classroom. A teacher can send out direct messages to the members of their class after school or on the weekends. This quick, brief reminder would be a good way to have students thinking about their coursework outside of the school room. Twitter is also fast. It would be resourceful for the teacher to use Twitter as a quick check-in on the students.

For me, I believe Twitter can be only a small tool used in the classroom. I do not shun the idea of using such technology in my classroom, but I am a little leery of using too much unfiltered content. Twitter would be a good way of checking up on students and sending out fun articles or memes that I come across that pertain to what I am teaching.

I would not want to use Twitter as a main crutch in my education practices, however. The internet is an unforgiving environment. Anything can be taken out of context. Text does not always come across with the same tone it was written in, Tweets can be misconstrued. I will exercise extreme caution when using the internet in my classroom, but I do believe staying current and up to date with issues and topics is vital. Twitter is a good bridge between the old, classic ways of teaching, and the newer, more fast-paced world that we live in today.